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Artspace

Inside New York's Swankiest Art Fair: A Connoisseur's Preview of the ADAA

By Karen Rosenberg

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The annual Art Show of the Art Dealers Association of America is where careers are re-made. Although the fair has skewed more contemporary in recent years, it's still the go-to March fair for dealers looking to show off a prized estate or elevate the reputation of a veteran artist. That tendency appears to be even more pronounced at this year's ADAA, as a larger scholarly and market-driven movement to identify undersung greats of 20th-century art prompts dealers to give the usual blue-chip suspects a rest. Below, Artspace previews some of the (re)discoveries.

BARRY LE VA
David Nolan Gallery



Barry Le Va, Working installation at the artist's studio, Los Angeles, 1967. Courtesy of the artist and David Nolan Gallery, New York

Whether or not they know it, the many young artists today who make haphazard-looking, improvisational installations owe something to Barry Le Va. A pioneer of the diffuse style known, variously, as "Scatter Art" and "Process Art," Le Va has dispersed materials such

as felt, chalk, flour, and shattered glass across large expanses of floor in a way that looks impulsive but is actually somewhat scripted. (His pieces generally begin with written directives and diagrams.) Le Va has long been admired by critics and art historians (he was included in MoMA's seminal 1970 group show "Information," and the ICA Philadelphia gave him a retrospective in 2005), but he's still not nearly as well-known as his contemporaries Donald Judd and Richard Serra. David Nolan's ADAA booth, which reprises Le Va's late-1960s "distributions" of felt, aluminum, and steel in a single installation, should help to raise his profile.